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BACCHYLIDES

A PROSE TRANSLATION

E. POSTE



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*BACCHYLIDES*



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# BACCHYLIDES

*A PROSE TRANSLATION*

BY  
*Edward*  
E. POSTE, M.A.  
FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD

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## PREFACE

SOME lovers of poetry, not readers of Greek, may glance with interest at a prose translation of the odes of Bacchylides which have been recently recovered from Egyptian papyri. They will hardly need to be warned that all, or nearly all, the poetry is inevitably washed out of a prose translation: even if—a large assumption—it retain the substantial tissue of the poet's thought. All brilliancy of diction and harmony of

rhythm of course disappear ; indeed, even in verse, only a translation into Italian or Spanish could reproduce, or make any approach towards reproducing, the many-fyllabled epithets and sonorous cadences of the Greek. Some fragments, too imperfect to interest the general reader, have been omitted.

Bacchylides, who flourished between 500 and 450 B.C., was a native of Ceos, the modern Zea, as also was his maternal uncle Simonides. Both were rivals of Pindar, and were placed by ancient critics on a list of the nine greatest masters of lyric poetry.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE	
1. HERCULES AND MELEAGER . . . . .	1	5 +
2. THE DAUGHTERS OF PROTEUS . . . . .	8	10 +
3. THESEUS AND MINOS . . . . .	13	17
4. YOUTHFUL THESEUS . . . . .	19	18
5. NEMEA . . . . .	22	8
6. AJAX, OR THE TROJANS . . . . .	26	13
7. IO . . . . .	29	1a
8. CROESUS . . . . .	31	3 +
9. MENELAUS . . . . .	35	15
10. DEIANIRA . . . . .	37	
11. PEACE . . . . .	39	



# I

*The following ode celebrates a victory in the horse races at Olympia won by Hiero, tyrant of Syracuse, at some period between 500 and 450 B.C. The same victory is the subject of one of Pindar's extant odes. What Hiero had to do with Hercules or Meleager is a question which must be left to the conjecture of the reader, as to which the translator can offer little or no assistance. There were doubtless tragic incidents in the career of Hiero; and Bacchylides, after remarking that no human prosperity is unalloyed, proceeds to relate that even the invincible son of Zeus had certain adventures far from joyous.*

**H**IGH-DESTINED lord of car-borne Syracusans, thou canst rightly judge, if any living mortal can, the violet-crowned Muses' dulcet strains: and now, resting awhile from cares of state, turn hither thy attention, and

I

B

pronounce whether the low-cinctured Graces helped to weave his lay the guest who comes to your famed city from Zea's sacred isle. A votary of golden-filleted Urania he fain with his own voice would sing the praises of Hiero. High aloft cleaving the deeps of ether with fleet tawny wings, the eagle, messenger of Zeus, wide-ruling thunderer, boldly travels, confident in matchless might, where lesser warblers fear to venture. Neither peaks of the vasty earth nor dangerous billows of the ever-restless main stay him, but onward through the abyss of heaven with fine-spun plumage he sweeps, his sole companion Zephyr, conspicuous to mortal gaze. I too have myriad paths, by the grace of dark-haired Victory and of brazen-mailed Ares, to celebrate your praises, Oh illustrious sons of Dinomenes; on whom may heaven never cease to smile.

Chestnut-hued Phereclus, storm-footed steed, was witnessed victorious by golden-fingered dawn both by the fair stream of Alpheus and

on the haunted meads of Pytho: and by holy Earth I swear, never dust from rival hoof has foiled him when he neared the goal. Fleet as the north wind's blast, and docile to the rein, along shouting nations he speeds winning victory for hospitable Hiero. Call a mortal happy to whom heaven metes a share of triumph, an envied station, and a life of pomp: absolutely blessed there is none of earth's children.

Even he who levelled many a hostile tower, the unconquerable son of Zeus who hurls the flaming thunderbolt, descended, they say, to the infernal halls of fair Persephone, to drag from Hades to the light of day the iron-jawed monster, whelp of deadly-fanged Echidna. There he saw the souls of hapless mortals by the waters of Cocytus, like leaves that the north-west wind drives up and down the sheep-browzed spurs of Ida. Among them gleamed conspicuous, wielding a spear, the lifelike form of a dauntless warrior, grandchild of Porthaon.



Him in refulgent armour noting, Alcmena's heroic son brought the shrill-twanging cord to his bow's curved tip, oped his quiver and took thereout a brazen-headed shaft; when forward stepped the shade of Meleager, and thus addressed him, knowing whom he saw: 'Son of mighty Zeus, stay where thou art, and with serener mind forbear to vainly launch a hostile bolt at souls of the dead. No foe confronts thee.' So spake he. Astonished stood Amphitryon's princely son, and cried: 'What mortal or immortal fire—what region—reared such a scion? and what hand slew him? Peradventure fair-cinctured Hera will send the same adversary against my life. But that is a concern for Pallas of the yellow hair.' Him answered Meleager, his cheek bedewed with tears: 'Hard it is for mortals to bend the resolution of the gods. Else had car-borne Oeneus allayed the ire of high, flower-crowned, white-armed Artemis, supplicating, fond fire, with sacrifices of many goats and many tawny-

hided oxen. But unappeasable was the wrath of the goddess. She sent, huntress maiden, a monster boar of undaunted fierceness into the lovely dales of Calydon ; where, resistless in its might, it felled orchards with its tusks, slaughtered fleecy flocks, and every mortal it encountered. With it we, picked band of Hellas, waged desperate battle for six days without stay ; and when high heaven gave Aetolia victory, we set ourselves to bury those whom the tusked monster had slain in furious onset, Ancaeus and Agelaus, best of my dear brothers born of Althaea in the far-famed halls of Oeneus. But still more warriors were doomed to fall, for the offended huntress daughter of Latona had not yet ceased her wrath, and we joined fierce battle with the valiant Curetes for the boar's tawny hide. There among many others I slew Iphiclus and good Aphareus my mother's gallant brethren. For fierce Ares makes no distinction of friend or foe, but shafts fly blindly at opposing ranks, carrying death wher-

ever fortune wills. The sore-stricken daughter of Thestius remembered not this, and—ah hapless mother—resolved my death—ah passion-governed woman. She dragged from rich-carved casket and kindled the quickly burning brand that at my birth fate doomed to be coeval with my days. At the moment I was stripping of his arms Clymenus, valiant son of Deipylus, a youth of noble build, whom I had overtaken outside the walls, when the Curetes fled to the goodly towers of ancient Pleuron. A sudden faintness seized my soul; I felt my strength decline, alas; and with latest breath wept to feel life's youthful splendour flitting. Men say the eye of Amphitryo's fearless son then and never else was moistened by pity for the ill-starred hero, as thus he answered: 'Mortals' best fate is never to be born nor ever to behold the sun's bright rays. But nought avails repining: so let my tongue frame words to mould the future. Remains there in the palace of Oeneus, dear to Ares, any virgin

daughter of features like to thine? Her would I gladly make my honoured bride.' Him answered dauntless Meleager's sprite: 'In her father's house I left the sweet-voiced Deianira, unacquainted yet with mortal-charming, golden Aphrodite.'

White-armed Calliope, stay here thy shapely car. Be now thy theme Zeus, lord of Olympus, ruler of gods; the ever-rushing flood of Alpheus; royal Pelops; and Pisa, whence far-famed Phereclus returned victor in the race to Syracuse's towers, bringing to Hiero a sure token of heaven's favour. Truth requires us to push envy from our bosom with both hands, and praise the mortal who succeeds. A Boeotian of old days, Hesiod, servant of the Muses, said: 'The man whom the immortals honour should be honoured by all mortals.' I readily greet Hiero with auspicious bodings of prosperous career, for that has put forth vigorous stems; which may Zeus, most mighty fire, ever guard uninjured by the storm of war.

## II

*This ode celebrates the victory of a native of Metapontum in a wrestling match in the Pythian games at Delphi. The connexion of the victory with the story of the Proetides consists in the fact that the same Artemis who healed the daughters of Proetus was a deity worshipped at Metapontum and the victor's patron goddess. She derived, according to Callimachus, her title 'Healer of the mind' (Hamera) from curing the Proetides of their moon-struck madness.*

[*A few lines, apostrophizing Victory, are wanting.*]

AND on the golden floor of Olympus,  
stationed by the throne of Zeus, thou ad-  
judgest rank of merit to mortals and immortals.  
Hail fair-haired daughter of just-judging Zeus!  
By thy grace athletic youths with choral dance and  
revelry already proclaim Metapontum a heaven-  
favoured city; hymning the son of Phaëscus,

mark of all eyes, victor in the Pythian games. Him the god whom flowing-robed Latona bore in Delos received with auspicious glance ; and on the head of Alexidamus fell many a wreath of flowers telling of unchequered victory in the rude wrestling match. On that day the sun never saw him fallen on the lap of earth. No, and I will boast that in sacred Pelops' haunted vale by Alpheus' stream, had only Justice not been made to stray from her true path, a pale olive wreath won in contest against the champions of all Hellas had encircled his brows when he returned to the nurse of famous steeds, his native land. [No malice] in that sacred vale assailed the youth with tortuous guile, but or some adverse god or erring human judgement wrested the glorious prize from his hands. And now he owes a splendid triumph to Artemis the golden-shafted huntress, the healer of the mind, the unerring archer ; her to whom the son of Abas and his fair-robed daughters erst built an altar, goal of many worshippers.

Forth from the splendid halls of Proetus  
almighty Hera once drove the maidens under  
the resistless yoke of madness. They with still  
childish souls entering the sanctuary of the  
purple-zoned goddess, said that their fire far  
outhone in wealth her who sits beside the  
throne of Zeus, majestic king. She in dis-  
pleasure darted into their bosoms abhorred  
illusions, and they fled into the mountain forest  
uttering wild bellowings<sup>1</sup>, leaving the towers  
of Tiryns and its god-built streets. For 'twas  
there that, deserting heaven-favoured Argos,  
dauntless brazen-shielded demigods had dwelt  
full ten years with their all-envied king. For  
strife implacable from slightest cause had  
flashed into flame between the sons of Abas, the  
brothers Proetus and Acrisius. Through them  
the people whom they ruled were afflicted with  
civil broils, and partisan tribunals, and slaugh-  
terous strife. So they entreated the Abantian  
brothers to cast lots for the fertile plains, while

<sup>1</sup> 'Proetides implerunt falsis mugitibus agros.'—VERGIL.

the younger should found the city Tiryns, before irreparable ill ensued. And Zeus, imp of Cronos, in regard for the progeny of Danaus and chivalrous Lynceus, vouchsafed to heal the baleful disorder. Audacious Cyclopien builders coming from afar raised a wondrous wall for a goodly city, and there the godlike heroes dwelt in high renown, having quitted storied Argos, birth-place of fleet steeds. 'Twas thence the dark-tressed virgin daughters of Proetus fled. Anguish seized the father's heart, crushed by the strange disaster; and he thought to cleave his breast with two-edged sword; but his spearman band with soothing words and strong hands hindered him. Full thirteen moons the maidens lurked in darksome forests and roved over Arcadia's sheep-browzed glens. But when their fire reached Lufus' fair stream, after laving in its waters he invoked crimson-scarfed Latona's ox-eyed child, with hands uplifted to the swift-chariotteering sun, to heal his children of their dire false-



weening lunacy—‘and I will offer thee in sacrifice twenty tawny-hided oxen never yet subjected to the yoke.’ The daughter of an almighty fire, the huntress maiden, heard his prayer and, persuading Hera, healed the flower-crowned virgins of their god-forsaken madness. They straightway enclosed for her a sacred grove and reared her an altar, and stained it with the blood of victims, and instituted yearly dances of maiden choirs. ’Twas thence that starting, oh golden lady of subject cities, thou wentest with Achaeans dear to Ares to horse-pasturing plains of Italy, and, auspicious fortune in thy train, dwellest in Metapontum; where they gave thee a lovely grove by the banks of deep Casuentus in compensation for thy lost sanctuary, after that by doom of the immortals, leagued with brazen-mailed Atridae, they laid in late ruin Priam’s lofty towers. Whoso judges with just mind will find in every age myriad glorious exploits of Achaeans.

### III

*On the walls of the temple of Theseus at Athens, according to Pausanias, was to be seen a picture representing the last scene of the adventure narrated in the following ode.*

*In prehistoric days, before Athens was tyrant of the Aegean, she owed to Crete an annual tribute of seven girls and seven boys to be sacrificed to Minotaur, the Cretan monster.*

*In this ode Bacchylides assumes that Minos, the Cretan king, has received the tribute; and Theseus, the Athenian hero, in some unexplained position, is on board the vessel which bears them to Crete. The mention of Athena in the opening lines is of good omen for the captives.*

*Eriboea in after days was mother of the Aeginetan hero, Ajax.*

*Minos had wedded Pasiphae, daughter of the Sun, as we shall be reminded in the ode.*

**A** BLUE-PROWED ship, bearing valiant Theseus and twice seven noble children of Ionia, was swiftly cleaving Cretan

waters. On its far-gleaming sails fell blasts of Boreas by the heft of high, aegis-swaying Athena. And magic gifts of the charm-cinctured goddess Aphrodite stung the heart of Minos. He no longer checked a rash hand, and touched the white cheeks of a maiden. But Eriboea shrieked to the brazen-mailed descendant of Pandion. Theseus beheld, and beneath frowning brows rolled an indignant eye, heart-struck with keen pain. And thus he spake: 'Son of mighty Zeus, no longer law-revering wisdom rules thy will. Use not, oh hero, tyrannous violence. Whatever heaven's resistless doom hath decreed and the scale of justice hath imposed, the utmost of our predestined lot, we will suffer when it comes. But do thou curb oppressive purpose. If a high-born maiden, Phoenix' fair child, bride of Zeus beneath the peaks of Ida, made thee by thy birth most exalted of mortals; me too the daughter of rich Pittheus bore to sea-god Poseidon, and received as wedding gift a golden veil from

violet-garlanded Nereids. Wherefore, king of Cnossus, I bid thee abstain from deep-wounding outrage. For I would never willingly see again the charming light of immortal dawn after thou shouldest offer dishonour to any of the youths. Ere that happens we will show what strength is in our arms, and the issue heaven shall arbitrate.' Thus spoke the hero, armed with justice. Amazed were the crew to hear his overweening rashness; and he who wived the daughter of the Sun was stirred to anger. He formed an instant plan, and cried aloud, 'Mighty ruler, Zeus my fire, list to my prayer. If in sooth thou beest my fire by Phoenix' white-armed daughter, now send thou down from heaven the swift, fiery-maned lightning, signal all may recognize. And if Troezenian Aethra bore thee also, Theseus, to the earth-shaking god Poseidon, boldly fling thy fair body into thy father's halls, and bring back the golden ring that now decks my finger from the waves' salt abyss. Thou shalt see whether my prayer is

granted by the imp of Cronos, lord of the lightning, universal king.' Mighty Zeus granted the exorbitant desire, according Minos transcendent honour, to give a dear child clear attestation. He hurled the lightning. Minos, valiant hero, when he saw the welcome portent, pointed towards the vault of heaven and said : ' Thou seest, Theseus, the unambiguous response of Zeus, and now do thou leap into the basivoiced waters, and thy sire, the imp of Cronos, lord Poseidon, shall give thee glory unparalleled on earth's verdant plains.' So spake he. The other's courage recoiled not, and stepping on to the vessel's shapely stern he leaped, and the deep received him into its liquid forest. Then the child of Zeus relented in his inmost soul, and bade them stay the shapely ship that hastened down the wind. But fate purposed another way. Onward rushed the rapid barque, sped by a gale of Boreas blowing from the stern. All the band of young Athenians trembled when the hero leapt into the waves, and

gentle eyes dropped tears from hearts that boded dire disaster. But dolphin denizens of the brine fleetly bore strong Theseus to the palace of his steed-borne sire. He reached the divine abode, and beheld with awe the storied daughters of blessed Nereus; for their beauteous limbs gleamed with fire-like radiance, and their heads were circled with fillets of woven gold, as with lightly-bending feet they disported in joyous dance. He saw in lovely bower his sire's dear consort, majestic, ox-eyed Amphitrite; who flung upon him a purple mantle, and on his crisp locks set a wondrous diadem, erst wedding gift from wily Aphrodite, twined with roses. Nought willed by heaven is incredible to sober-thinking mortals. He arose at the ship's narrow stern before their eyes. Hah! from what tormenting thoughts he delivered the Cnossian king, when, undrenched by the wave, he climbed the ship's side, amazing spectacle, the divine adornments glittering on his limbs. The radiant

bench of maidens with new-created courage  
raised a loud cry of gladness, the sea resounded  
with the peal, and the boys closing round them  
sang a psalm with sweet voices. God of Delos,  
mayest thou, charmed by the Zean chorus,  
grant it heaven-sent guerdon of applause.

#### IV

*The following song for two voices was probably written for the Athenian Ephebi, the youths who garrisoned the frontier fortresses in their second year of military service.*

*One of the speakers is Aegeus, king of Athens: the other may be Medea, who fled to Athens after taking vengeance on Jason.*

*Procoptes is another name for Procrustes, and Polypemon may be his father.*

**K**ING of sacred Athens, Lord of Ionians  
who live at ease, what tidings caused the  
brazen-throated trumpet to found a warlike  
note? Is a hostile commander crossing the  
frontier of our land? Or are marauding  
brigands, defying shepherds, driving our flocks  
in lawless raid? Or what alarms thy soul?



Tell me, for, methinks, if any mortal has valiant warriors to defend him, it is thou, oh offspring of Pandion and Creusa.

A herald came by land from the far end of the isthmus bringing tidings of wondrous deeds of some man of might. He flew proud Sinis, strongest of mortals, begotten by him of Cronos born, the earth-shaker god, Lytaeus : killed the homicidal boar of the groves of Crommyon, and the ruthless bandit Sciron : closed Ceryon's wrestling school : and made Procoptes, overmatched, drop Polypemon's heavy hammer. What may be his crowning exploit is my fear.

Who said he the man was, and whence, and with what train equipped? Said he that he comes with warlike armament and numerous host ; or unaccompanied, like merchant wandering in foreign lands, but with strength and prowess and daring singly to overcome such mighty ones? Or has he heaven's mission to bring vengeance on the wicked? Else it were not easy, ever battling, not to meet with a

misfap. In long space of time every issue comes to pass.

He said that only two men follow him : that from his gleaming shoulders hangs a sword [ . . . ], two polished javelins are in his hands : a shapely Spartan helm presses his auburn locks : a purple tunic and a woollen mantle of Thessaly enfold his breast : his eyes flash red volcanic flame : he is in youth's earliest prime : his delight is in the games of Ares, war and battle's brazen clangour : and his feet are bound for splendour-loving Athens.

## V

*This ode celebrates a victory at Nemea by a native of Phlius. The river Asopus on which Phlius stood was the mythical father of many daughters who gave their names to various cities and islands, e.g. Thebes, Aegina, Salamis, &c. After touching on the origin of the Nemean games and the victor's deeds, Bacchylides seems about to launch on some Theban mythology when the fragment ends abruptly.*

*When Adrastus, king of Argos, and the other 'Seven against Thebes' were at Nemea on their march to assist the exiled Polynices to recover his throne, the death of the child Archemorus was recognized by the son of Oecleus, the prophet Amphiaraus, one of the Seven, as an omen of disaster, and he vainly urged his companions to abandon the enterprise.*

*Achilles traced his lineage, through Peleus, Aecus, and Aegina, to the river-god Asopus.*

*Amazons from the banks of the Thermodon were said to have fought against the Greeks on the side of the Trojans.*

**G**RANT, oh golden-spindled Graces, persuasive splendour to the lay which the violet-crowned Muses' inspired priest prepares to sing of Phlius and the fertile plain of Nemeæan Zeus: where white-armed Hera reared of old, first occasion for Heracles of glorious exploit, a flock-slaughterer, deep-voiced lion. There crimson-shielded demigods, picked band of Argives, held the first games over the tomb of young Archemorus, slain as he gathered flowers by felon snake with yellow-flashing eyes, an omen of impending overthrow. Oh resistless power of fate! Did not Oecleus' son urge them to march back to their warlike homes? Hope often gives ill counsel. She it was who then sent against Thebes Talaïonid Adrastus, leagued with steed-borne Polynices, after those famed contests in the fields of Nemea.

Illustrious are the mortals who bind their auburn locks with the triennial wreath. Fortune now hath granted that boon to victorious Automedes, pre-eminent among the athletes of the pentathlum as is among the stars, when the month is halved, the full-orbed moon : so goodly a form he showed to encircling hofts of Hellas when he threw the rounded discus; or when the dark-leaved ash's stem hurled by his hand through the sky called forth applauding shouts; or when, in the closing wrestle's lightning flashes, with the same transcendent strength he flung to earth his strong-limbed adversaries ere he returning fought the dark-whirling waters of Asopus. That river's name hath travelled to all regions and as far as the sources of the Nile. Even the dwellers by the fair stream of Thermodon, skilled javelin-hurler daughters of fleet-steeded Ares, rued, oh famous river, the prowess of a child of thy flood beneath the lofty towers of Troy. To every region on broad highways travel myriad tales of thy race of

ample-vestured daughters whom the gods with  
happy destiny have seated on the thrones of  
unconquerable nations. Who hath not heard  
of Thebe of the hyacinthine locks and her  
well-built towers? . . .

## VI

*The ode, of which the following passage is a fragment, celebrated the victory of Pytheas, an Arginetan, in the boys' pancratium at Nemea. This victory is also celebrated in an extant ode of Pindar.*

*In the beginning of the ode Teiresias has a prophetic vision of the victory of Heracles over the Nemean lion, and the institution of the Nemean games.*

HE shall stay the tyrant's lofty insolence,  
and give justice to the world. How  
insupportable a hand the child of Perseus lays  
upon the neck of the devouring lion with exhaust-  
less resource, when his glittering death-dealing  
steel cannot pierce the unyielding hide, and the  
blade bends backward! Truly I predict that  
spot shall one day witness much-sweated con-  
tests of Hellenic champions for the wreaths of  
the pancratium . . .

[*After mentioning the Aeginetan hero, Ajax, grandson of Aeacus, the poet then proceeds:*]

Who, stationed on his vessel's stern, stayed bold Hector of the brazen helm fiercely bent, though he was, on destroying the ships with horrid fire; what time the son of Peleus, nursing wrath, left the field and released the Dardan host from its terrors. Till then, panic-stricken, they ventured not to leave Ilion's fair bulwarks, but crouched behind them, dreading the fierce shock of battle, so long as Achilles madly raged in the plain, shattering their ranks with brandished, host-slaughtering spear. But when the battle saw no more the violet-crowned Nereid's dauntless son: as on the darkling waters Boreas furiously assaults with whelming waves seafaring men whom he surprises resting from their toils by night, but ceases to storm when the light of morning breaks: a calm smooths the billows: and, the South wind bellying the sails with its breath, the gladdened sailors reach the def-



paired of harbour : so the Trojans, when they heard that the grim Achilles was staying in his tent because of lovely yellow-haired Briseis, lifted thankful hands to heaven, seeing war's storm-cloud fringed beneath with auspicious light. Then, leaving with all haste the walls of Laomedon, they rushed into the plain, bringing vast array of war, and struck terror into the Danai, urged on by javelin-hurler Ares and the lord of Lycia, Loxias Apollo. They reached the shore and fought by the ships' fair sterns, and blood of men slain by hands of Hector reddened the dark soil . . .

. . . They weened that they would destroy the blue-prowed ships and all their crews, and that on the morrow the sound of joy and revelry would fill the god-built streets of Ilion. But fate ordained that, ere that hour arrived, the whirling waters of Scamander should be em-purpled with their blood as they died by Aeacid hands, overthrowers of their towers . . .

## VII

*This fragment begins with the story of Io.*

**T**HERE are myriad paths of deathless song for who so has received gifts from the Pierian Muses, and whose hymns are clothed with splendour by the violet-eyed, wreath-dispensing Graces. Weave now, oh commended Phantasy of a Cean bard, some novelty concerning lovely, heaven-favoured Athens. Endowed by Calliope with her choicest gifts, it befits thee of all others to soar a wondrous flight.

Once upon a time leaving Argos, land of fleet steeds, Inachus' rosy-fingered child was fleeing far, by the will of mighty Zeus, blest potentate, transformed into a cow with golden horns : and Argus, whose unwearied eyes looked

every way, was bidden by majestic, golden-mantled Hera, uncouchingly, unsleepingly, to guard the heifer of the lovely horns. Not even Maia's son could elude his watchful gaze either by the bright-rayed day or the shades of holy night. But whether fate ordained that the swift messenger of Zeus should slay the monster-breeding Earth's fell offspring, Argus, or his never-resting watch outwearied him at last, or soothing strains of the Pierides closed his eyes in slumber, my surest way of shunning error is only to relate the end. After Io, bearing Epaphus in her womb, had reached the flowered banks of Nile, Zeus made her child ruler of linen-stoled priests, lord of peerless wealth, and founder of a mighty clan. From Epaphus sprung Agenor's scion, Cadmus, sire of Semele in seven-gated Thebes. She gave birth to the inspirer of the frenzied Bacchae, Dionysus [giver of the vine] and inventor of the wreath-crowned dance . . .

## VIII

*This ode celebrates a chariot victory of Hiero at Olympia, 468 B.C., won the year before his death.*

CHOOSE fertile Sicily's queen, Demeter,  
and her violet-crowned daughter for the  
theme of thy song, melodious Clio, and the  
fleet Olympic-racer steeds of Hiero. For with  
transcendent victory and grace they flew along  
the broadly-whirling Alpheus, winning wreaths  
for Dinomenes' heaven-favoured son. And  
Achaean ranks exclaimed: 'Thrice happy  
man who, by Zeus invested widest ruler of  
Hellenes, has the wisdom not to hide his high-  
piled wealth behind a dark obscuring shroud.  
The temples are astir with festive sacrifices of  
oxen, the streets with hospitality; and bright  
flash the coruscations from the gold of deep-

chafed tripods, set before the shrine where the holiest grove of Phoebus by Castalia's stream is ministered by Delphic priests.'

Heaven, Heaven demands a tribute from every fortune-favoured mortal. For in bygone days horse-taming Lydia's monarch, when by Zeus' fatal ordinance Sardis fell before the Persian host, Croesus was protected by the golden-forded god, Apollo. When the grievous day arrived, the king was not one to await the added woe of a slave's all-tearful doom, but reared a pyre before the brazen walls of his palace-court, and mounted thereon with his comfort dear and fair-haired, wildly weeping daughters. And, raising his hands towards the o'er-canopying heaven, he cried reproachfully: 'Oh, overmastering supernal power, where is the gratitude of all the gods? Where is Latona's princely son? . . . [Lydian blood stains] the golden-fanded Pactolus. Lydian dames are ignominiously torn from well-built homes. The hated foe is henceforth to be their dear lord. No! death is

a sweeter lot.' So saying he bade kindle the gorgeous-carpeted wooden structure. His daughters shrieked and flung their hands about their mother's neck: for horrid to mortals is the face of imminent death. But when the fierce fire's gleam began to penetrate the pile, Zeus brought overhead an abyss of darksome cloud, and quenched the yellow flame. Incredible is nought that the divine will works. Thereupon the Delian god Apollo bore the old king to the Hyperboreans, and enthroned him in their midst with his taper-ankled daughters in requital of his piety, because that of all mortals he had sent the richest offerings to god-haunted Pytho . . .

King Apollo, the herdsman god, once told the son of Pheres: 'Mortal as thou art thou must nurse two expectations: that to-morrow's solar ray is the last which thou shalt see; and that thou shalt count another fifty years of happy life.' Live righteously and joyously; this is highest wisdom. The wife will under-

stand these words : The depths of ether have  
no stain ; the water of the sea no corruption ;  
gold is cheerer of the heart ; and to man it  
is not given to cast off hoary eld and recover  
youthful days. But virtue's radiance dims not  
with the mortal frame's decay. It is nurtured  
by the muse. Hiero, thou hast shown the  
world prosperous fortune's fairest flowers. A  
bright career receives not his due meed from  
silence ; and one of those who aim aright will  
be he who shall sing the honeyed strains of  
the Cean nightingale.

## IX

*This fragment relates to the demand addressed to the Trojans for the restoration of Helen. The Grecian embassy was introduced by Antenor, of whom we read in Vergil: 'Antenor potuit mediis elapsus Achivis Illyricos penetrare sinus.' His sons were worshipped as heroes at Cyrene. They give the ode its title, Antenoridae.*

THEIR fire, prudent hero, bore to royal Priam and his sons all the message of the Achaeans. Then heralds speeding through the wide-spread city summoned the Trojan tribes to the people's meeting-place. Everywhere ran the tidings loudly-voiced, and hands uplifted to the immortal gods prayed that their troubles soon might have an end. Say, Muse, whose tongue first urged the plea of right. Pleisthenid Menelaus uttered winning words counselled by the fair-robed Graces.



‘Oh warlike Trojans, it is not high-ruling and all-seeing Zeus that is the cause to men of their calamities; for all mankind are free to hold fast to straight-walking Justice, companion of chaste Order and wise Law. Happy they whose children choose to have this dweller in their streets! But she who flourishes by treacherous falsehood and bold contempt of equal measure, nought-reverencing Arrogance, first lightly gives away another’s wealth and havings, and after plunges into deep disaster. She it was that brought annihilation on the overweening race of Earth-born giants . . .’

## X

*The following fragment shows that the plot of the Trachiniae, a play which some attribute to Sophocles, others to Iophon, his less-gifted son, had been already outlined in the verses of Bacchylides.*

SUCH was the strain that Delphic choirs sang before thy far-famed shrine, oh Pythian Apollo. Already Oechalia, said the lay, had been left a flaming ruin by Amphytryo's dauntless son, when he touched at the Euboean promontory, purposing to offer from his spoils nine deep-voiced bulls in sacrifice to cloudy-throned Kenaian Zeus, two to the god who lifts the sea and shakes the earth, and to Athena, stern-eyed virgin, a single heifer, unyoked, lofty-horned. Then an overmastering power inspired Deianira with a plan, that cost her many tears, to recover her consort's love, after

she heard the cruel tidings that white-armed Iole was on her way, sent under escort to his palace as a lovely bride by Zcus' dreadful son. Ah, hapless wife! Ah, evil-starred! How direful was her deed! Malevolence of a mighty one wrought her ruin, and darkness shrouding future days, when on the rushing waters of Lycormas she took into her hands a fatal gift from Neffus. . . .

## XI

*Before the discovery of the papyri the following fragment was the longest remnant of the poems of Bacchylides.*

FOR mortals Peace has blessings in her hands, plenty and poesy's nectared flowers. And for the immortals thighs of oxen and long-fleeced sheep burn in yellow flames on rich-carved altars. Athletic sports and the flute and festive dances busy the young. But in the shields' iron-bound handles the tawny spider weaves her webs, and the long-shafted spear-heads and double-edged swords are marred with rust. Nor is the brazen clarion heard frightening sweet slumber, soul-careffer, from the eyelids. But joyous revelry fills the streets, and notes of love-songs tremble in the air.







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